

# BOOK REVIEWS

**THORACIC SURGERY.** By Richard H. Sweet, M.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Surgery, Harvard University Medical School. Illustrations by Jorge Rodriguez Arroyo, M.D., Assistant in Surgical Therapeutics, University of Mexico Medical School. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1950. \$10.00.

This is a difficult book for a reviewer to report upon. The title "Thoracic Surgery" is misleading; in fact, it should be more accurately entitled "Techniques of Thoracic Surgery as Practiced by Richard Sweet, M.D."

It starts out with the concept that any qualified surgeon may become proficient in thoracic surgery by mastering the techniques described by Dr. Sweet. It makes the thoracic surgeon purely a technician. Diagnosis, pathological findings and indications for operation are entirely ignored. With the above limitations in mind one can then proceed to evaluate the work as a whole and here one can find much of value. The operations described are those found useful by the author. Discussion of the anatomy of the thoracic cage and the illustrations presented are excellent. The Jackson-Huber nomenclature was adopted for the pulmonary segments, but here, as elsewhere in the book, no credit is given to the originator of the nomenclature. Preoperative medication, preparation and anesthesia problems are well discussed. The operation of thoracoplasty is well covered. Of interest is that in the treatment of the "stove-in" chest no mention is made of the value of a local anesthetic block. Of unique value and arrangement is the outline of procedure for pneumonectomy and lobectomy on the right and left sides with back references to anatomical illustrations. It is refreshing to see that Dr. Sweet debunks "vago-vagal" reflexes and attributes these phenomena to anoxia.

The problem of cardiac arrest and its prophylaxis is very well presented. The various operative procedures under "Mediastinum" and "Esophagus" are well discussed.

Of interest in discussing esophagoplasties is the fact that no mention is made of esophageal dilatation. The excellent operation known as the Heller procedure is only referred to and in this book Dr. Sweet advocates fixation of the stomach above the diaphragm following esophagoplasty.

Viewed critically, this volume is an excellent addition to a surgeon's library where there is need for a ready reference book giving good anatomical details and outlining a few proven procedures. However, it should not be considered as being a textbook of thoracic surgery.

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**BRAIN METABOLISM AND CEREBRAL DISORDERS.** By Harold E. Himwich, M.D., Chief, Clinical Research Branch, Medical Division, Army Chemical Center, Maryland. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1951. 451 pages. \$6.00.

This is a truly monumental piece of work in which the author attempts to correlate what is known of metabolic processes in nervous tissue with normal and abnormal functioning of the human nervous system. Incomplete as this knowledge is at present, familiarity with it is of great value to every physician, and most particularly to the psychiatrist.

The various alternative metabolic pathways are considered in detail, and in a highly technical manner. However, such is the organization of the book that there is always a summary provided in relatively non-technical language for the reader not especially qualified in the particular field under discussion.

The author ventures rather beyond the borders of certain knowledge into the field of speculation, but there is nothing

dogmatic about his presentation of controversial subjects, and one is stimulated by his boldness. As well as being of interest to anyone with a curiosity in regard to what we know of how the nervous system functions, the book is of tremendous value to those engaged in research in this field, since it is well documented.

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**CLINICAL LABORATORY METHODS—Fourth Edition.** By W. E. Bray, B.A., M.D., Professor of Clinical Pathology, University of Virginia, Director of Clinical Laboratories, University of Virginia Hospital. 119 test illustrations, and 18 color plates, 614 pages. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1951. \$7.25.

In no textbook has the reviewer ever seen more concentrated, better organized material presented in 562 pages of text than in this particular fourth edition. Most of the worthwhile and important material has been carried over from previous editions but this edition has brought the book up to date so that most of the present accepted tests of recent origin are included. Improved techniques in other examinations are also included in this edition. The Rh problem has been brought up to date and considerable improvement has been made in the study of bone marrows, the anemias, the mycoses, and bacteriology, especially in reference to the antibiotics. The book includes an excellent table of known normal values expressed in both milligrams per cent and milliequivalents. Papanicolaou's method of staining is included in the text and many very recent modifications of older tests have also been included. This book is a "must" for all pathologists, clinical pathologists, and all physicians having any interest whatsoever in laboratory procedures. It is highly recommended. Its only fault is in its illustrations. It is hoped that in future editions the author will secure the services of a qualified medical illustrator, as many of the illustrations definitely detract from an otherwise excellent book.

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**DIABETES INSIPIDUS.** By Harry Blotner, M.D., Associate Visiting Physician, Beth Israel Hospital, Boston, Mass. Edited by Henry A. Christian, A.M., M.D., LL.D., Sc.D. (Hon.), M.A.C.P., Hon. F.R.C.P. (Can.), D.S.M. (A.M.A.). Oxford University Press, New York, 1951. 160 pages.

This monograph presents in ideal fashion for the doctor the subject of diabetes insipidus. The introductory historical section is of great interest. This is followed by the full discussion on the physiology of thirst and water metabolism and the pathological anatomy of patients with diabetes insipidus, a comprehensive clinical description, laboratory studies and treatment. The book is well illustrated with many charts and tablets, reproductions of x-rays, etc., and there is a bibliography of 470 titles. Certainly Dr. Blotner left no stone unturned in producing a comprehensive and up-to-date discussion of this interesting subject.

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**DIABETES MELLITUS—Principles and Treatment.** By Garfield G. Duncan, M.D., Clinical Professor of Medicine, Jefferson Medical College. Illustrated. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1951. 289 pages. \$5.75.

This is a monograph on diabetes. Although a number of other books have been written on the subject, this one deserves particular mention because it is written clearly and succinctly. The reviewer finds himself in general agreement with the author's ideas; even where he may not agree, he finds the ideas well presented.